

53896 to 53908—Continued.

ways. The pulp is usually sweetish and pleasant and is eaten by Europeans as well as by natives. A sweet edible oil is obtained from the seeds, and the seeds and fruit pulp are used medicinally. (*Vol. 2, p. 627.*)

53900. Var. *utilissima*. A form cultivated in Bengal, the Northwest Provinces, and the Punjab during the hot weather and the rains. The fruit varies from short oval or cylindric to elongate, 2 to 5 feet long, and is either straight or curved like some varieties of cucumber. It varies in color from dark green to nearly white, usually changing to a bright-orange color when ripe. When young it is much eaten by Europeans in the Northwest Provinces in lieu of cucumbers, being in season long before that vegetable, but not so highly flavored. When little more than half grown they are pickled; when ripe they have much the flavor of the melon, and will keep for several months if carefully gathered and hung up. They are also eaten raw and are much used in curries. A sweet edible oil is obtained from the nutritious seeds, which are also used medicinally. (*Vol. 2, p. 631.*)

53901. Received as *Cucumis momordica*.

53902. *LUFFA ACUTANGULA* (L.) Roxb. Cucurbitaceæ. **Gourd.**

A climber, native to northwest India, Sikkim, Assam, and eastern Bengal. The fruit is highly esteemed by natives and is eaten in curries or dressed with clarified butter. When half grown it is one of the best indigenous Indian vegetables, peeled, boiled, and dressed with butter, pepper, and salt. When fully developed it is about a foot long, but if allowed to grow longer than 4 inches it rapidly deteriorates in quality. The fruits, seeds, and leaves are used medicinally, and the dried fibrous rind is used as a brush for sizing paper. (*Vol. 5, p. 94.*)

For previous introduction, see S. P. I. No. 51230.

53903. *LUFFA CYLINDRICA* (L.) Roemer. Cucurbitaceæ. **Gourd.**
(*L. acgyptiaca* Mill.)

A native of India, cultivated or naturalized in most hot countries of the world. In India it is common everywhere and is often cultivated, especially on the plains. The fruit, which is smaller than that of *L. acutangula*, is edible and is similarly used in curries, etc., by the natives. An oil is obtained from the seeds; the seeds are used medicinally; and the dry fruit, which is filled with an interwoven network of fiber, is used as a flesh brush in Turkish baths. (*Vol. 5, p. 96.*)

For previous introduction, see S. P. I. No. 49163.

53904. *MIRABILIS JALAPA* L. Nyctaginaceæ.

A yellow, purple, or magenta flowered plant cultivated or spontaneous over the greater part of India, being equally plentiful in the hotter valleys of the northwest Himalayas, from the plains up to 7,000 feet, and in the far east in Bengal, Manipur, and Burma. The plant is often so prevalent near village sites as to exclude all other vegetation. The leaves are said to be largely used as a vegetable at Ooson in the Salem District. The powdered root and seeds are used in cosmetics, and the root and leaves are used medicinally. (*Vol. 5, p. 253.*)

For previous introduction, see S. P. I. No. 47589.

53905. *OCIMUM TENUIFLORUM* L. Menthaceæ.
(*O. sanctum* L.)

A somewhat shrubby herbaceous plant found throughout India, Burma, and Ceylon and distributed in the Malay Archipelago, Australia, western Asia, and Arabia; it is cultivated occasionally as a potherb by Europeans, for which purpose it is very useful. The leaves, seeds, and flowers are used in native medicine. (*Vol. 5, p. 444.*)